

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claim 9.

1-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method comprising polishing a composite material containing silica and silicon nitride with an acidic polishing slurry comprising:

(a) from about 0.1 to about 3.5 % ~~0.1 to about 6%~~, by weight, of a colloidal silica abrasive,

(b) from about 1 to about 6%, ~~0.5 to about 10%~~, by weight, of a fluoride salt

~~wherein the colloidal silica abrasive is present in a quantity ranging from about 0.1 to about 3.5% by weight and the fluoride salt is present in a quantity of from about 1 to about 6%, by weight, and~~

(c) wherein the slurry has a pH ranging from about 2 to about 6.

11. (Currently Amended) The method polishing slurry according to Claim 10, wherein the fluoride salt is an ammonium salt.

12. (Currently Amended) The method polishing slurry according to Claim 10, wherein the fluoride salt is ammonium fluoride or ammonium hydrogen fluoride.

13. (Currently Amended) The method polishing slurry according to Claim 10 4, wherein the fluoride salt is ammonium hydrogen fluoride.

14. (Currently Amended) The method polishing slurry according to Claim 10, wherein the colloidal silica has a mean particle size of from about 10 nm to about 1 μ m.

15. (Currently Amended) The method polishing slurry according to Claim 14 7, wherein the colloidal silica has a mean particle size of from about 20 nm to about 100 nm.